Livable Community is Master Plan

Tavernier Creek

Mile Marker 97

An island community rich in history and character











A Coordinated Effort By: Monroe County Planning & Environmental Resources Department, and the Community of Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97.

MASTER PLAN BELLES FOR TAVERNIER CREEK BRESGE TO MILE MARKER 97

2004-2024

DRAFT FOUR

July 4, 2004

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Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan for Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97	July 4, 2004
Community Vision	er 97 Planning Area as: heritage, natural setting, with improvements to edevelopment of commer-
We envision the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Planning	Area as:
An island community committed to preserving its heritage, natural and stands of native tropical hardwood hammocks, with improve the visual character of the U.S. 1 corridor, limited redevelopment of cial properties, and neighborhoods where residents have access to and recreational facilities.	vements to of commer-

Executive Summary

The Livable CommuniKeys Program is the local community planning initiative of the Monroe County Planning Commission and the Planning & Environmental Resources Department. The Livable CommuniKeys program is the forum in which community and redevelopment plans that offer a clear direction for each community's future are prepared. This Master Plan has been created for the planning area of Tavernier Creek Bridge to approximately Mile Marker 97 of unincorporated Monroe County. Over the last four years, the residents and property owners of the planning area have met with Monroe County Planning Staff to identify the needs and desires of the community for future development and preservation of the planning area.

Objective 101.20 of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan states that "Monroe County shall address local community needs while balancing the needs of all Monroe County communities. These efforts shall focus on the human crafted environment and shall be undertaken through the Livable CommuniKeys Planning Program." The Planning Department, with Policy 101.20.1, was charged with the task of designing a Community Master Plan for the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 area.

The creation of this document involved coordination with local agencies and reports already created such as the Stormwater Master Plan, Monroe County Seven Year Roadway and Bicycle Path Plan, Monroe County Wastewater Master Plan, Florida Keys Scenic Highway and Overseas Heritage Trail, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Reports and District Six FDOT projects and others. This plan utilizes current conditions for the following areas: Land Use; Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities, Environmental Resources; Economic Development and Tourism; Historic, Cultural, and Archeological Resources; and Housing and Community Design and Streetscape for the planning area. With this report, staff will proceed to implement the goals for this particular island community to guide future development and redevelopment including the protection of existing residential and commercial areas.

The theme throughout the LCP is one of protection for the natural environment, preservation of the historic elements of Tavernier and guided development and growth in a manner that is compatible with community goals.

The LCP introduced several new concepts and new strategies to implement the goals identified through the plan development process:

- Adopt and utilize the tier system to categorize land according to environment sensitivity in order to guide protection and acquisition of land by the county.
- Evaluate non-conforming land uses to determine appropriate designation and continue to utilize the Land Use District Map and supporting Future Land Use map to evaluate individual properties.
- Preserve the natural environment by adopting a tier map system, limiting clearing for new construction to maintain tree cover and increasing the native hammock buffer areas adjacent to US 1. Designate MM 91 to Burton Dr. as a "Community Center" with guidelines and standards including the "Commercial Enhancement Plan" that protect and compliment the town of Tavernier's historic context.

- Protect the integrity of Tavernier's Historic District by researching and clearly identifying the boundaries of the district and by providing guidelines and standards that manage future development and protect historic resources and the natural environment.
- Recognize the shortage of housing for employees, maintain and improve the existing stock of affordable housing in combination with the development of new employee housing as part of the development or redevelop of commercial buildings constructed at a village scale under the design guidelines and standards established for the area.
- Plan for new commercial development based on an inventory and analysis of existing commercial uses and future needs assessment.
- Recognize the importance to the community and economy of existing marina facilities
 encouraging redevelopment to meet existing health and environmental standards and
 protect existing legally established commercial uses located within the shoreline setback
 by providing an opportunity to rebuild in the existing footprint if destroyed.
- Coordinate efforts of the Florida Department of Transportation and the county to promote a safer pedestrian and bicycle environment and to mitigate the affect of U.S.1 traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Protect, maintain and acquire public shoreline as part of a county wide parks and recreation master plan that includes a range of passive and active recreational opportunities.
- Maintain community involvement in the implementation of the plan by providing progress updates and creating a committee to advise the Planning Commission on project proposals within the identified corridor.

Table of Contents	
Chapter One: Introduction Summary of the LCP Planning Process Format of Master Plan Elements	9 27 29
Chapter Two: Land Use and Redevelopment Element Goal One: Directing Growth	32
Chapter Three: Community Character Element Goal Two: Preserve Neighborhood Qualities Goal Three: Maintain Community Character Goal Four: Protect Historic and Cultural Resources	37 40 43
Chapter Four: Housing Element Goal Five: Maintain Housing Affordability	49
Chapter Five: Environmental Protection Element Goal Six: Preservation, Management, and Restoration	54
Chapter Six: Economic Development Element Goal Seven: Redevelopment and Infill Goal Eight: Water Dependant Commercial Uses	59 63
Chapter Seven: Transportation Element Goal Nine: Transportation System	67
Chapter Eight: Parks and Recreation Element Goal Ten: Parks and Recreation	72
Chapter Nine: Community Facilities Element Goal Eleven: Public Facilities	80
Chapter Ten: Community Involvement Element Goal Twelve: Community Involvement	85
Capital Costs Summary	88
Glossary	89

List of Figures 11 Figure 1.1 Location/boundary map of the planning area. 13 Figure 1.2 Aerial map indicating hammock areas. 14 Figure 1.3 ADvanced IDentification map of the planning area. 16 Historic overlay district with historically significant sites. Figure 1.4 Figure 1.5 18 Vacant lands within the planning area. 25 Figure 1.6 Proposed tier system map. Figure 1.7 Flow chart illustrating the master plan process. 30 Figure 2.1 Map of proposed FLUM and zoning changes. 35 Figure 3.1 Historic overlay district and proposed expanded district area. 47 50 Figure 4.1 Existing residential areas within the planning area. Figure 6.1 Existing commercial uses within the planning area. 62 73 Figure 8.1 Existing parks and recreation areas. **List of Tables** 18 Table 1.1 Public and private vacant and developed lands. 20 Table 1.2 Population and housing demographics. 22 Table 1.3 Annual household income for the planning area. Distribution of vacant lands in the proposed tier system. 24 Table 1.4 73 Table 8.1 Public shoreline access points.

Note: The totals on different tables and within the text may not be identical because of the different data sets used to generate them. The primary differences are because of rounding, the inclusion of bay-bottom in the base numbers or changes in the tax rolls. The differences, for the most part, are less than five percent (5%).

Acronyms

ADID Advanced Identification of Wetlands

ALS Advanced Life Support

BOCC Monroe County Board of County Commissioners

CARL State of Florida Conservation and Recreational Lands Program

DCA Department of Community Affairs

EAR Evaluation and Review ESA Endangered Species Act

FDCA Florida Department of Community Affairs

FDEP Florida Department of Environmental Protection

FDOT Florida Department of Transportation FKAA Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority FKCCS Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study

FKERTF Florida Keys Environmental Restoration Trust Fund

FLUM Future Land Use Map

FWS United States Fish and Wildlife Service

HCC Historic District Commission
HPC Historic Preservation Commission

IS Improved Subdivision

LCP Livable CommuniKeys Program

LOS Level of Service

MCLA Monroe County Land Authority NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NROGO Non-Residential Rate of Growth Ordinance

PUV Private Upland Vacant Parcel PVA Population Viability Analysis

ROGO Residential Rate of Growth Ordinance SFWMD South Florida Water Management District

SMMP Monroe County Storm water Management Master Plan

SOR State of Florida Save Our Rivers Program
SSMP Monroe County Sanitary Sewer Master Plan

TDR Transferable Development Rights

TNC The Nature Conservancy

TRE Transferable ROGO Exemptions

Introduction

The Livable CommuniKeys Program is a community-driven planning effort to address the very specific needs of unique island communities within the Florida Keys. The overall goal is to determine the appropriate amount, type and location of additional development within the LCP planning area. The LCP process includes community participation through a variety of methods. This process generates a community vision, assesses the needs of the community with goals and objectives. The objectives are evaluated for feasibility within the current regulatory and physical framework for how well they fit the community vision. A Master Plan contains the specific development layout for the LCP planning area as well as action items that must be implemented to achieve the development and community vision. The Master Plan is a working document that is continually scrutinized and updated by the community and planning staff.

Relationship to Comprehensive Plan

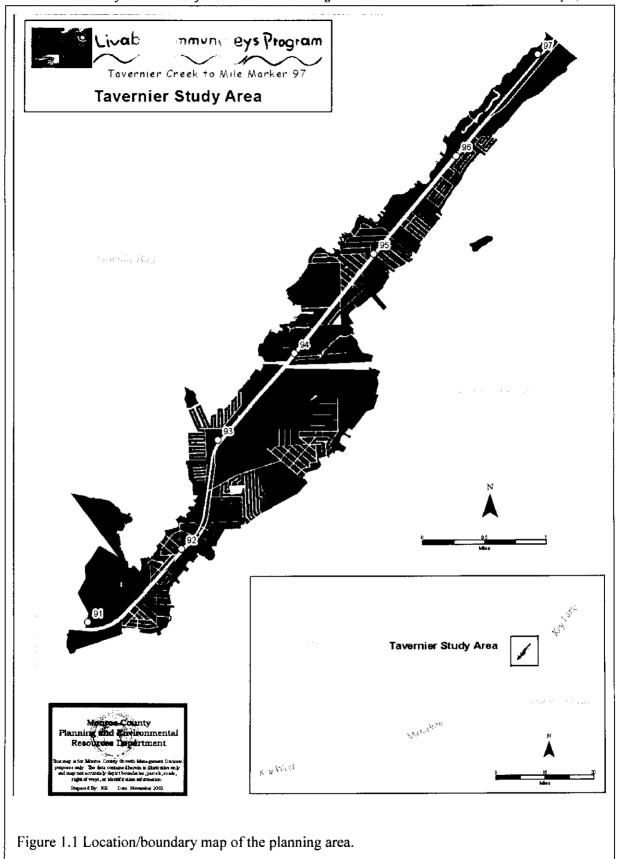
The Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1993 and became effective in its entirety in 1997. It contains the guiding goals, objectives and policies for implementation of growth management actions over the 20-year period covering 1990 through 2010. Some of the actions apply equally throughout Monroe County such as the need for adequate solid waste disposal facilities or the allocation of building permits limited by hurricane evacuation clearance times. Other actions, while applying countywide, vary in their importance by locale. Actions such as the need for preservation of historic resources or the planning of recreational facilities take on different meaning in different local communities up and down the Keys. There are also local needs that are not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan at all such as community goals towards beautification.

The Master Plan does not replace the Comprehensive Plan but focuses on the very specific needs of the local community. It is also a proactive planning tool rather than a strict regulatory document in that it identifies actions needed to meet the community's needs and goals. The Master Plan is attached as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. Some existing Comprehensive Plan policies will not be affected at all by the Master Plan. Other existing policies may be modified for consistency or entirely replaced by the Master Plan. The Livable CommuniKeys Program and Master Plan development are outlined in the comprehensive plan in Policy 101.20.1 which states:

"Monroe County shall develop a series of Community Master Plans. Master Plans will be developed in accordance with the following principles:

- 1. Each Community Master Plan will contain a framework for future development and redevelopment including the designation of growth boundaries and future acquisition areas for public spaces and environmental conservation;
- 2. Each Community Master Plan will include an Implementation Strategy composed of action items, an implementation schedule, and a monitoring mechanism to provide accountability to communities:

- 3. Each Community Master Plan will be consistent with existing Federal and State requirements and overall goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan to ensure legal requirements are met. While consistency with the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is paramount, the 2010 Plan will be updated and amended where appropriate;
- 4. Each Community Master Plan will be closely coordinated with other community plans and other jurisdictions to ensure development or redevelopment activities will not adversely impact those areas;
- 5. Each Community Master Plan will include appropriate mechanisms allowing citizens continued oversight and involvement in the implementation of their plans. Through the Community Master Plans, programs for ongoing public involvement, outreach, and education will be developed;
- 6. Each Community Master Plan will include a Capital Improvements program to provide certainty that the provision of public facilities will be concurrent with future development;
- 7. Each Community Master Plan will contain an environmental protection element to maintain existing high levels of environmental protection as required in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan;
- 8. Each Community Master Plan will include a community character element that will address the protection and enhancement of existing residential areas and the preservation of community character through site and building guidelines. Design guidelines for public spaces, landscaping, streetscaping, buildings, parking lots, and other areas will be developed through collaborative efforts of citizens, the Planning Department, and design professionals reinforcing the character of the local community context;
- 9. Each Community Master will include an economic development element addressing current and potential diversified economic development strategies including tourism management. The preservation and retention of valued local businesses, existing economies, and the development of economic alternatives will be encouraged through the process;
- 10. Each Community Master Plan will contain a Transportation Element addressing transportation needs and possibilities including circulation, safe and convenient access to goods and services, and transportation alternatives that will be consistent with the overall integrity of the transportation system not resulting in negative consequences for other communities; and
- 11. Each Community Master Plan will be based on knowledge of existing conditions in each community. The Planning Department will compile existing reports, databases, maps, field data, and information from other sources supplemented by community input to document current conditions; and
- 12. Each Community Master Plan will simplify the planning process providing clarity and certainty for citizens, developers, and local officials by providing a transparent framework for a continuing open dialogue with different participants involved in planning issues."



Relationship to State Legislation

A Comprehensive Plan is required to be adopted by Monroe County under Florida Statute 163 and must be compliant with the required format and minimum content listed in the Florida Administrative Code (FAC 9J-5). The Master Plan will be adopted as a modification of the existing Comprehensive Plan and the Florida Department of Community Affairs will review the modification for compliance with the applicable statutes and codes. This review will likely be most focused in areas where Master Plan policies replace existing Comprehensive Plan policies and serve as the Evaluation and Review (EAR) for this planning area.

Master Plan for Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97

This Master Plan covers the area from the Tavernier Creek Bridge at approximately Mile Marker 91 to Mile Marker 97. The geographic boundaries of the planning area are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Offshore Islands

The Florida Keys archipelago from Tavernier Creek to MM 97consists of Key Largo and additional scattered islands including Tavernier Key and Pigeon Key with other offshore islands such as Butternut Key, Dove Key and Rodriquez Key in the vicinity.

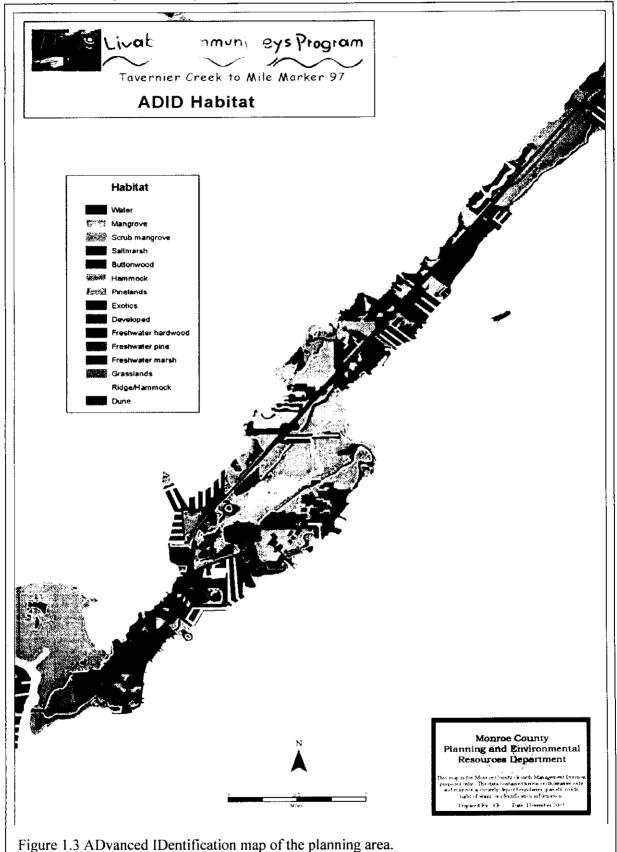
While not specifically part of the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan, offshore islands are a vital facet of the Florida Keys natural environment. In recognition of the important part they play, off shore islands are afforded special protection under Policy 102.7.2 and Policy 102.7.3 of the 2010 Master Plan which limits development potential on offshore islands. The Monroe County Land Development Regulations further limit development on offshore islands affording them another level of protection through Sections 9.5-122.3 Evaluation criteria, 9.5-262 Maximum residential density and district open space and 9.5.347 Open space requirements amongst other provisions.

Island Geology

This island community extending from Tavernier Creek Bridge to approximately Mile Marker 97 is comprised of Key Largo Limestone, formed from ancient reefs, which are extremely porous. The geological processes that formed the reefs and the Florida Keys as we know them to-day began in the Pleistocene Period. During this era, melting glaciers raised sea level to where water covered much of the Florida peninsula and all of the area that is now the Keys.

The warm temperatures and shallow waters that covered this area were ideal for coral growth. Scientists have discovered that the Keys developed into a nearly continuous coral reef tract from the area that is now Miami to the Dry Tortugas. Core samples show massive hard corals and point to a larger, denser coral reef system than the living reef that now lies off our shores. When the last Ice Age struck, about 28,000 years ago, sea levels dropped drastically, and the Keys, as well as the Florida Bay, were transformed into swamp, then dry land. Then, about 11,000 years ago, water levels moderated to approximately current levels, leaving the Keys exposed and filling Florida Bay.





Introduction DRAFT FOUR 14

Near Shore Waters

The shallow waters near the shore are composed of a series of interconnecting and interdependent natural habitats. These include fringing saltmarsh/buttonwood or transitional, fringing mangroves and sea-grass, meadows as well as hard-bottom regions, patch reefs and bank reefs. The areas' ecosystem, as well as other areas throughout the Florida Keys, supports a diverse assemblage of species, including those which are commercially and recreationally important, unique to the area or spatially limited due to habitat constraints.

Hammock Types

Tropical Hardwood Hammocks can be very dense and support many types of Keys' wildlife. Tropical Hardwood Hammock is found only in the Keys and some parts of Miami-Dade County, the more diverse hammocks are primarily located in the Keys. The Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area has vacant as well as developed lands with Tropical Hardwood Hammock. These hammocks are either low elevation (below five feet mean sea level) or high elevation (above five feet mean sea level). The elevation of land, with the associated salinity of the soil, creates two different types of forests. Those hammocks with lower elevations and saltier soils typically have smaller trees, while higher elevation forests typically can get larger trees and a wider variety of plant species.

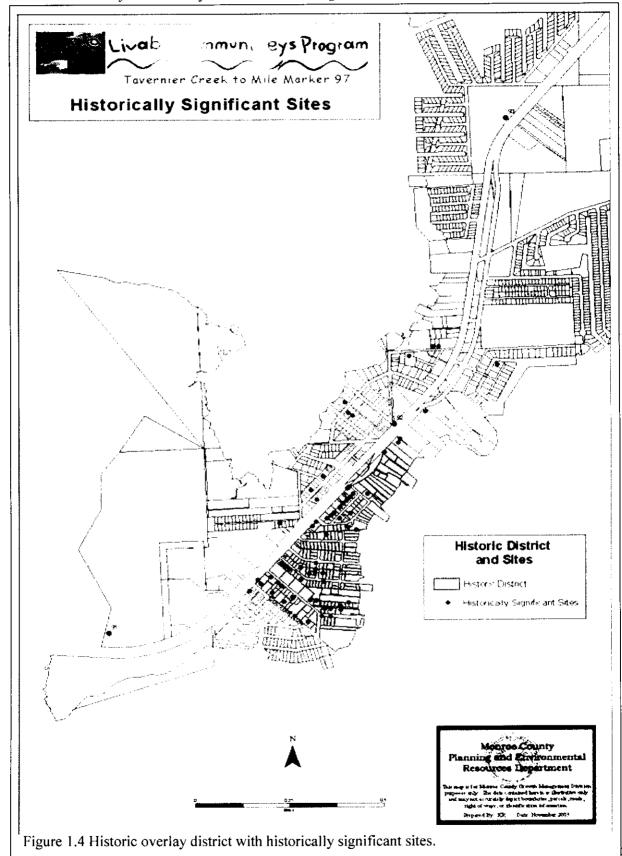
Large areas of hammock, some vacant and some developed residentially, are located within the Harris Ocean Park Estates and Palma Sola Subdivisions, near U.S. 1 at Mile Marker 92 Ocean-side, Mile Marker 94 ocean and bayside, within Lime Grove Estates both ocean and bayside and at the northern end of the planning area, in Key Largo Narrows.

ADID Wetlands Classifications

ADvanced IDentification of Wetlands (ADID) studies were performed within the planning area. Larger wetlands are mapped within the following platted subdivisions in the area: Largo Beach, Ocean Park Village, Palma Sola, and unfilled platted lots within Hammer Point. There are also wetlands identified within Lime Grove Estates, and large wetland tracts adjacent to Hammer Point and Sunset Acres, as well as Oceanside north of Burton Drive at Mile Marker 93. Other individual wetland lots are scattered throughout the planning area. Figure 1.3 illustrates the habitat within the planning area.

Endangered Species

The Monroe County Endangered Species Animal Maps identify five separate areas of federally designated endangered species habitat within the planning area. These are the Palma Sola subdivision, the isolated hammock north of Harry Harris Park, the hammocks on both ocean and bay side at Mile Marker 94, bay side at approximately Mile Marker 94.3-95, and both ocean and bay side at Key Largo Narrows at the northern end of the planning area. All of these marked habitat areas indicate that the White Crowned Pigeon is known within the area, and the other five potential species are the Indigo Snake, the Key Largo Woodrat, the Key Largo Cottonmouse, the Miami Black Head Snake and the Schaus' Swallowtail Butterfly.



Historical and Cultural Context

The history of this Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area is the culture that created the island community. Limes, tomatoes, pineapples and tropical fruits qualified Tavernier as a farming community in the early 1900's. Hurricane destruction and the advent of Flagler's Railroad resulted in the demise of the farming industry with a corresponding change to a commercial fishing trade in the historical area.

As a result of continued efforts, by local organizations and residents, to maintain the historical resources within Tavernier much of the community remains contextually intact. A historic overlay designation, known as "Historic Tavernier", was established in the planning area with adoption of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. It is one of the most unique and well-preserved historic communities in unincorporated Monroe County. The community includes a mixture of historic structures located on the ocean side between Coconut Row to the south and just beyond mile marker 92 to the north. Several historical structures within the community are located along U.S. 1 (Overseas Highway) and are currently occupied by commercial uses. A majority of the historic structures are residential homes nestled in the neighborhood that extends behind the commercial area. The purpose of the historic overlay designation was to protect Tavernier's historic resources in accordance with Objective 104 of the Comprehensive Plan. Prior to the designation, the historical homes and businesses located within the area were lost or in danger of being compromised as a result of increased pressure from new development. It is evident that current development in the outer fringes of the historic community does not fit within the context of the community character.

The planning area also consists of an assortment of archaeological and cultural resources. To the south of Tavernier Historic District and on the ocean side is a large parcel of land between Ocean Boulevard and Tavernier Creek Bridge, which is known as Tavernier Creek Hammocks. The Land Authority recently donated the parcel of land to the State of Florida with the intent that it be preserved as a conservation area. Aside from its more apparent environmental qualities, the land holds rich historical, cultural, and possible archaeological resources. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks has indisputable ties to the history of the Upper Keys. According to a local report, the area around Tavernier, like that of much of the Upper Keys, was a thriving community of farmsteads focused on the production of pineapples, tomatoes, and other vegetables which were exported to the mainland. Tavernier was a sparsely populated area with large tracts of land being utilized for cultivation. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks was once one of these thriving farmsteads, which extended behind what is today the Tavernier Town Plaza. After a series of irreparable events in the early 1900's, attention turned towards commercial fishing as a source of income. Tavernier Creek became an essential route between the Atlantic Ocean and the Florida Bay, and a central location to establish business and residence. Tavernier steadily became a thriving multifaceted community that offered an abundance of services and opportunities.

In addition to the farm on the Tavernier Creek Hammock parcel, the site includes a cistern of unknown origin, and the location of an old ball field. The ball field was a popular area for community activity. It was located on the southern end of the property until being relocated adjacent to the Old Tavernier School between 1930 and 1940. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks is sig-

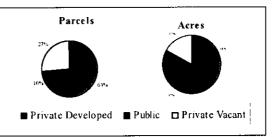
nificant to local heritage and is an attractive location for sustainable improvement in a manner which can enhance social value, spark economic opportunity, provide an educational and recreational resource for residents at a minimal cost while protecting and preserving the integrity of the existing environment.

The primary method of protecting resources in the planning area has been through the establishment of a historic overlay, land acquisition, and the designation of historic places and sites. According to a report produced by GAI consultants, fifty-three (53) historical sites have been identified as significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Land Use

The planning area contains most of the uses that are needed to support a small thriving community. The residential community is primarily single family and mobile homes, although there are a couple of condominium complexes. Commercial uses are primarily located on U.S. 1 with the largest concentration in the MM 91 to MM 93.5 area. Services and light industrial uses (boat repair, garages, construction companies, etc.) are concentrated bayside in this same general area, although, a mix of uses can be found throughout the U.S. 1 corridor. Water dependent uses such as marinas and boat rentals and water economically enhanced activities such as restaurants and hotels are located on the Florida Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

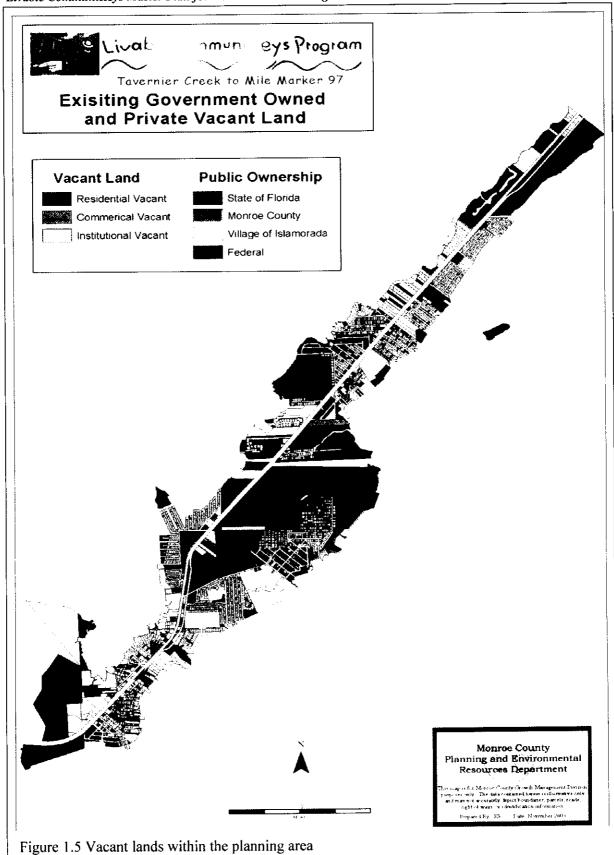
	Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total
Private Developed	2,912	623	35.8
Public	442	822	47.2
Private Vacant	1,210	295	17.0
Total	4,564	1,740	100.0



The Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area consists of 1,740 acres divided into 4,564 separate parcels and lots. Six hundred and twenty three acres are developed, leaving 1,117 acres vacant. The majority of this acreage is in public ownership: 822 acres. The remaining vacant 295 acres are in private ownership.

In order to determine the potential for future development in the planning area a vacant land analysis was undertaken using the County Geographical Information System (GIS) and the data from the property appraisers files. The majority of vacant lands in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area are publicly owned; 822 acres. There is a total of 295 vacant acres in private ownership divided into approximately 1,210 parcels, 660 of which are lots zoned for single family or mobile home construction. Nearly one hundred and seventy (170) of these lots and most of the parcels are in the designated Natural and Conservation area and are slated for acquisition. Part of the four hundred and ninety (490) lots remaining in the planning area may be inappropriate for development because of fragmented hammock areas or wetlands.

Many of the non-residential properties, which appear as undeveloped in the property appraisers data base are currently being used as storage lots or parking for existing businesses. Of the 110 vacant commercial parcels (20 acres) there are only 40 truly available parcels and five of these are in the Natural Resources and Conservation Area. However, a number of the existing sites are under utilized and are ripe for redevelopment.



Demographics

The demographic information included in this Master Plan was taken from the 1990 and 2000 Census. The data indicate that the permanent population of the planning area has declined more than ten percent (10%) from a population in 1990 of 4,301 to a population of 3,852. The decrease in population occurred while housing units counted in the Census increased by 235 units, a 7.3% increase. The shift in housing in the planning area is towards more seasonal occupancy (seasonal includes all types of second vacation home uses). In 1990, 998 units or 31% of the planning areas 3,206 housing units were only used on a seasonal basis. In 2000 1,455 units, 42% of the total housing units, were for seasonal use, an increase of 457 seasonal units.

The Census Bureau statistics identified a decrease in the total number of rental units in the planning area in the ten years between 1990 and 2000, from 681 rental units (606 rented, 75 for rent) to 560 rental units (520 rented, 40 for rent) in 2000, a decrease of 121 rental units. This decrease in actual numbers of rental units, even with an increase in the number of total housing units reflects an increase in seasonal/weekend owners. Single family residential homes account for 42% of the residences in the planning area. The remainder of the residential units is multi-family dwellings (4%), condominiums (24%) or mobile homes (30%). The decrease in permanent households and rental units in this planning area of primarily small houses and mobile homes illustrates the problem with the loss of affordable employee housing county-wide.

The planning area's permanent population of 3,852 residents is split evenly between males and females. The numbers of individuals living permanently in the area have decreased for all age groups, with the largest decrease in the 21 to 54 year old age groups (15%). The over 55 age group and the under 20 have decreased by 7.6% and 4.15% respectively.

Table 1.2 Population and housing demographics						
Census Blocks 9706 (1,2,3) and 9707				County		
	1990	2000	Percent Change	1990	2000	Percent Change
Persons	4,301	3,852	-10.4	78,024	79,589	2.0
Male	2,219	1,948	-12.2	40,976	42,327	3.2
Female	2,082	1,904	-8.5	37,048	37,262	0.6
0-20	780	748	-4.1	15,786	15,464	-2.1
21-54	2,055	1,749	-14.9	40,601	42,591	4.7
55-85	1,466	1,355	-7.6	21,637	21,534	-0.5
Households	1,971	1,755	-11.0	33,583	35,086	4.3
House units	3,206	3,441	7.3	46,215	51,617	10.5
Persons per occupied housing unit	2.03	2.19	7.9	2.24	2.23	-0.4
Occupied houses	1,971	1,755	-11.0	33,583	35,086	4.3
Renter occupied	606	520	-14.2	12,729	13,186	3.5
Vacant houses	1,235	1,686	36.5	12,632	16,531	23.6
For rent	75	40	-46.7	2,010	1,663	-20.9
For sale	71	67	-5.6	943	759	-24.2
Not occupied	34	30	-11.8	560	304	-84.2
Seasonal	998	1,455	45.8	7,928	12,628	37.2
Other	57	93	63.2	1,191	1,177	-1.2
Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000						

Population Projections

The permanent population in the planning area is 3,852 residents living in 1,755 households. Future population projections are made for a locality to provide government with the amount and timing of growth for which services and facilities will be needed in the future. Making population projections for the County is difficult. Normally to project future populations the availability of land designated for development is considered along with the rate of development of new homes, the numbers of households, which will result from development and the persons per household. In a planning area such as this, where the permanent population decreased by 10% while housing units increased by 7%, projecting future populations becomes very difficult.

ROGO is the system whereby residential permits are issued in Monroe County. Since 1992 when ROGO was started approximately 70 permits have been issued in the planning area. With more than six hundred lots in the planning area appropriately zoned for development of single family homes and land zoned for commercial uses which can be developed for employee housing there is available land for residential development. The current County and State emphasis on providing housing for the local workforce indicates that there will probably be an increase in allocations for affordable housing. For this projection it is determined that new development over the next twenty years will either continue at the same rate of the last ten years or increase by a maximum of 50% over the next 20 years. Therefore, between 140 and 210 new housing units will be constructed in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area by the year 2024.

The percentage of permanent housing units of the total will most likely continue at the current percentage (51% permanent households) or decrease over the next 20 years. Using 51% for the calculation results in a projection of 70 to 110 new housing units constructed in the planning area will be for permanent residents. This will increase the permanent population by between 155 and 234 persons if the household size continues to be 2.19 persons per household. The total permanent population will increase to between 4,010 and 4,085 persons. If the percentage of seasonal to permanent units continues to increase at the rate experienced between 1990 and 2000 the number of permanent households will be reduced by 10% and the permanent population will decrease. With the opportunities for providing employee/affordable-housing units in the planning area the potential for maintaining a larger percentage of the additional units as permanent housing has increased.

The County is required by Florida Statutes to plan for and provide adequate public facilities and services to the "functional population", which is a combination of the permanent, seasonal, and transient populations. By the year 2024, the new housing units constructed in the planning area will require service for an increase in the functional population of between 310 and 460 persons.

Income

The 2000 Census income statistics for the planning area report that nearly half of the households earn less than \$40,000 annually and 63% earn less than \$50,000. While 3% earn more than \$150,000 annually. In 1990, 75% of the permanent residents earned less than \$50,000 annually. The largest decrease in numbers of households was in the below \$20,000 annual income level, which decreased by 39%. It is impossible to tell from the statistics if this decrease in the lowest income levels is because of improving salaries and total income or if it reflects the change in the population to more seasonal and less rental units.

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census figures, the median income for this planning area's residents is \$42,830, which is comparable to the County median income of \$42,283.

Table 1.3 Annual Household income for the planning area						
	Census Tract 9706	(1,2,3) & 9707	Monroe County			
	1990	2000	1990	2000		
Total Households 1	1,971	1,755	33,583	35,086		
Median Household Income (\$)	30,231	42,830	29,351	42,283		
Household Income		1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1				
Less than \$20,000	585	355	10,642	7,254		
\$20,000 - \$39,999	686	539	11,648	9,057		
\$40,000 - \$49,999	212	209	3,406	3,870		
\$50,000 - \$74,999	258	292	4,435	6,974		
\$75,000 - \$99,999	117	166	1,341	3,632		
\$100,000-\$150,000	64	124	1,109	2,411		
More than \$150,000	48	70	1,030	1,908		
1. Actual total household figures for the	planning area are est	imates calculated	with population d	emograhic data.		
Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000						

Land Acquisition

For many years, the concurrent need for natural resource protection and relief to regulated land-owners has been a recognized problem throughout the Keys. Agencies who are participants and have been intermediaries in the acquisition of some of the sites within the Florida Keys Ecosystem project are The Nature Conservancy, Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA), State of Florida, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and South Florida Water Management District. In the early 1990s a priority acquisition plan that focused on remaining habitat and preservation of wildlife movement corridors was developed. All of these agencies can conduct acquisition activities essentially anywhere within the administrative boundaries that encompass the entire planning area. Their focus in the past has been on natural lands, usually on acreage parcels, that have higher wildlife habitat value.

Acquisition of land through the Florida Keys Ecosystem project includes most of the remaining unprotected Rockland hammocks (tropical hardwood hammocks) in the Keys. It is important habitat to many rare plants and animals and consists of 17 sites in the Upper and Middle Keys encompassing the remaining fragments of unprotected tropical hardwood hammock greater than 12.5 acres. The project includes habitat for migratory birds, the state-threatened white-crowned pigeon and 34 species of rare vascular plants and 34 rare animals. All the project sites are threat-

ened by intense development in the Keys.

Within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area, there are three areas which are part of this project: Dove Creek (498 acres, several large ownership's, remaining subdivided-187 acres acquired through MCLA), Tavernier Creek (83 acres, one major ownership), and Key Largo Narrows (one major ownership-acquired through MCLA).

Additional parcels in public ownership include: the former Ragen Tract (Tavern Towne Hammock); lands near the former Cooke Barrow Pit, Oceanside at Mile Marker 92; the former Unger tracts located ocean side at Mile Marker 94 and bayside at Mile Marker 94.5; the former Richardson tract bayside in Lime Grove Estates at Mile Marker 96; and the former DeCarion/Roberts Tract, also known as Curry Cove, at the Key Largo Narrows, Mile Marker 97 Ocean-side.

In addition to public agency purchase of private property, purchases of private lots have been made by ROGO applicants to garner additional "points" towards an allocation under the county's dwelling unit allocation system. These properties have been deeded to Monroe County.

Publicly owned lands account for 840 acres, nearly 50% of the vacant land in the planning area, and 440 of the 4,565 vacant parcels.

Comprehensive Plan Goal 105

This Comprehensive Plan amendment was designed to refocus land acquisition efforts, conserve natural resources and direct future development to infill areas in coordination with the Livable CommuniKeys Program. The proposed Tier System consists of a set of over-lay maps and regulations directing growth to infill existing subdivisions and commercial areas and identifying those areas, which should be acquired for conservation and density reduction. The System has a major role in the implementation of this Master Plan and the FKCCS. The mapping of the land outside of mainland Monroe County into one of three tiers provides a focus for acquisition and guidance to the public of areas most appropriate for development.

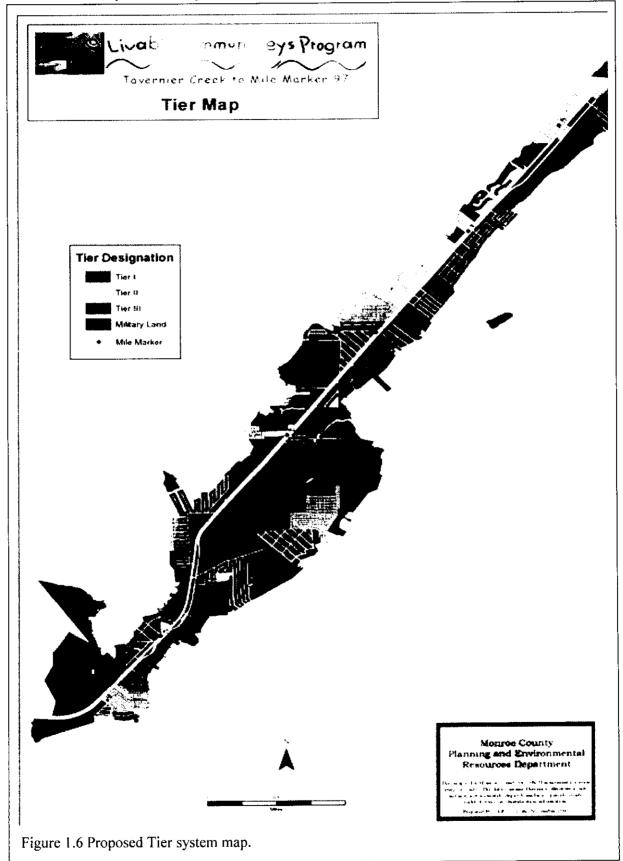
Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I) are designated to conserve and protect significant environmental habitat and provide for restoration and connection of fragmented habitat patches. Development is severely restricted and the vacant lands are included in County, State and Federal acquisition and conservation boundaries.

Transition Areas (Tier II) are designated to offer an alternative to developing fragmented habitat areas and to help reduce low-density sprawl. Subdivisions in this area are less than fifty percent (50%) built out. These areas are often appropriate for future development but because of the low density are also appropriate for a County density reduction program. This is a cooperative program between existing residents of the area and the County to acquire lots and either sell them back to the neighbors or maintain them as open space. New development is discouraged, but allowed with restrictions in the amount of permitted clearing. The current acquisition program is expanded to include vacant platted subdivision lots in this Tier.

Infill Area (Tier III) is designated for redevelopment and infill of new development. Development is encouraged in these subdivisions that are more than fifty percent (50%) built. Full infrastructure is present or in future plans. Community Centers may be designated and become eligible as receiver sites for Transfer of Development Right (TDR) and corresponding higher density.

The Tier system has been used as a tool in developing this Master Plan to estimate the development potential and amount of land acquisition required in the planning area. The map (Figure 1.6) and table (Table 1.4) present the distribution of parcels under the working draft Tier System in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area. The actual Tier Maps will be adopted as a zoning overlay after additional refinement.

in the second section is a second section of	Tier I		in the proposed Tie		Tier III	
	Parcels	IS/URM Lots	Parcels	IS/URM Lots	Parcels	IS/URM Lots
Private Vacant Residential	500	170	280	245	275	245
Private Vacant Commercial	6		8		100	
Public Land	400		6		30	
1. 72 of these lots are being	used for	oarking ar	d storage	e		
Source: Monroe County Planning	g Departme	ent	•			



25

Development Context and Constraints

Listed below for reference purposes are the primary existing development constraints from Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97. All of these constraints apply countywide but their particular application to this planning area is discussed below.

ROGO: As of the date of this report, the residential rate of growth ordinance (ROGO) allocates 42 total units (market rate plus affordable) annually to the Upper Keys. Permits for the planning area will continue to be limited and allocated with the rest of the Upper Keys under ROGO. Since the inception of the Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO) in 1992, sixty-three permits for new homes, including five affordable houses, have been issued and constructed in the planning area. Three applicants aggregated lots to receive extra points in the ROGO system decreasing the overall potential density. There are currently 17 ROGO applications awaiting allocation awards. Two of the 17 applications have received points for lot aggregation, further reducing the potential units.

Approximately 25% to 30% of the remaining vacant lots are environmentally sensitive and will receive negative environmental points in ROGO and have therefore been avoided by potential ROGO applicants.

NROGO: "NROGO" is the acronym for "Non-residential Rate of Growth Ordinance" under which the construction of new or expanded commercial uses is regulated. The amount of new and expanded commercial space permitted is tied to the level of residential development permitted, which is 239 square feet of commercial space per residential unit allocated. NROGO does not allocate commercial space by Keys sub-area but does so Keys-wide on a semi-annual basis.

To date, there have been no NROGO applications for any projects between Tavernier Creek Bridge and Mile Marker 97.

<u>Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study (FKCCS)</u>: Implementation of the FKCCS is required in the work program in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The FKCCS is being used to modify the ROGO and NROGO and this may affect the number and location of residential permits that can be issued in the future county wide.

Summary of the LCP Planning Process

Community Vision

We envision the Tavernier Creek Bridge to MM 97 Planning Area as:

An island community committed to preserving its heritage, natural setting and stands of native tropical hardwood hammocks, with improvements to the visual character of the U.S. 1 corridor, limited redevelopment of commercial properties, and neighborhoods where residents have access to the water and recreational facilities.

The community vision was written taking into consideration the responses received from the community at workshops, in the survey of the residents and landowners, and in the U.S. 1 business survey between MM 91 and MM 93.5.

LCP Citizen Participation Process

Three major public workshops and meetings held on March 1, 2001, September 20, 2001, and March 26, 2002 facilitated the LCP planning effort providing an opportunity for direct participation of the community with planning staff and each other. In addition surveys were used to try and gain a broader understanding of the concerns and desires of the members of the community who did not attend the meetings. The survey was included in the second of three newsletters that were mailed to all residents, property owners and interested parties. An additional survey was sent to businesses in the area to gain a better understanding of the issues of importance to the commercial segment of the population. From this outreach, the key community issues were identified and a community vision formulated.

Community Issues

As a result of the many forms of feedback from residents, evaluation of the planning area and analysis of the existing conditions, several issues were identified by the Community:

- 1. Maintain the existing small town community "island" character of the area.
- 2. Preserve the remaining significant natural lands.
- 3. Recognize the uniqueness of and preserve the Tavernier Historic District.
- 4. Limit additional new commercial development while providing opportunities to redevelop existing commercial structures.
- 5. Increase opportunities for local community involvement in planning issues.
- 6. Improve and expand existing water access and provide additional shoreline access for the residents.
- 7. Protect the existing water-related/dependent uses such as restaurants, marinas, and commercial fishing and permit rebuilding if destroyed in the footprint.

Planning Issues and Objectives

From the start of the planning process and throughout the development of the Existing Conditions Report and this Master Plan a number of planning issues and objectives have been identified and considered in the development of this plan. Following in no specific order of importance:

- Reduce impacts on safety and traffic movement from the highway and unlimited access development patterns.
- Provide opportunities for affordable/employee housing for the residents of the community.
- Reduce land use conflicts from non-conformities.
- Provide for flexible building setback and parking standards within the U.S. 1 corridor to reflect the historic development patterns.
- Explore alternative parking solutions for conforming and non-conforming commercial uses.
- Identify and protect existing water dependent uses, both environmental and economic, recognizing that the waters of the Keys are why people want to be here.
- Maintain and increase opportunities for water access for the community.
- Find ways to reduce the impact on the residential community from the large numbers of tourists that travel through the area on U.S. 1.
- Increase the land acquisition program to preserve the remaining high quality hammocks and wetlands in the planning area.
- Work with the neighborhoods in a cooperative effort to purchase hammock areas that create their "sense of place".
- Preserve the character of historic Tavernier, including the setting and context.

Because many of the planning concerns involved issues specific to the U.S. 1 corridor area, the Planning Department contracted for a Corridor Enhancement Plan which was funded by FDOT. Two public workshops were held specifically to address aesthetic and planning issues within the corridor area from Tavernier Creek to approximately MM 94.5. The first workshop was held on October 23, 2003 with a follow up design and planning workshop on December 4, 2003. Many of the ideas and recommendations which resulted from these workshops and the Tavernier Corridor Enhancement Plan are integrated into the LCP master Plan.

The Livable CommuniKeys Program (LCP) is a community-driven planning effort aimed at determining the amount, type and location of additional development appropriate for the planning area and is directly tied to the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan through adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. The need and budget for community facilities and services are identified to serve the existing community and any growth that may occur. The Monroe County Department of Planning and Environmental Resources have provided the professional guidance and expertise in drafting the plan.

Format of Master Plan Elements

There are thirteen elements in this Master Plan. Each one focuses on an issue of heightened importance to the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Planning Area. The format for these elements is different from the comprehensive plan because this Master Plan is a culmination of the LCP process, not a starting point. Therefore, the community and planning staff have already reviewed and analyzed much of the available data about the island and they have been through a planning process whereby "problems" (questions, issues and uncertainties) have been identified and needs have been verbalized.

The Master Plan provides the tools for problem solving by fulfilling three basic tasks:

- Statement of the goals of the LCP process as it applies to the planning area.
- Redefined analysis of specific community and planning needs to fulfill the goals.
- Identification of strategies and action to meet the needs.

Goals

Each element states a specific planning goal designed around the major topics to be addressed through the LCP process such as growth and redevelopment, economic viability, environmental protection, and community character.

Current Conditions Summary

Information specific to the planning area is available in the Existing Conditions Report. Some information was also provided during the LCP process in newsletters and workshops. Demographics, inventories of community facilities, and land ownership patterns are examples of information presented in this section.

Analysis of Community Needs

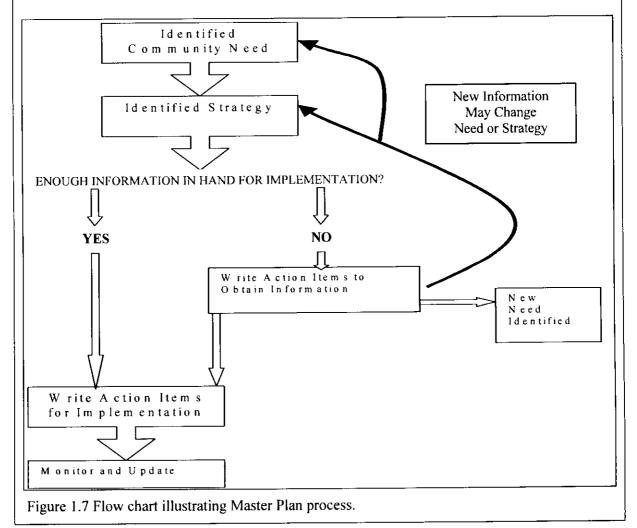
The problem, issue or shortfall in the community or environment and the opportunities are stated here. These have been identified either by the community or by the planning staff. The community includes the affected public, stakeholders, and elected officials and they have identified needs to the planning staff in a variety of ways: workshop participation, mail surveys, meetings, phone calls, and letters. The planning staff identified additional needs either through planning analysis of existing information, professional judgment based on observations of data or conditions, or coordination with facility or service providers.

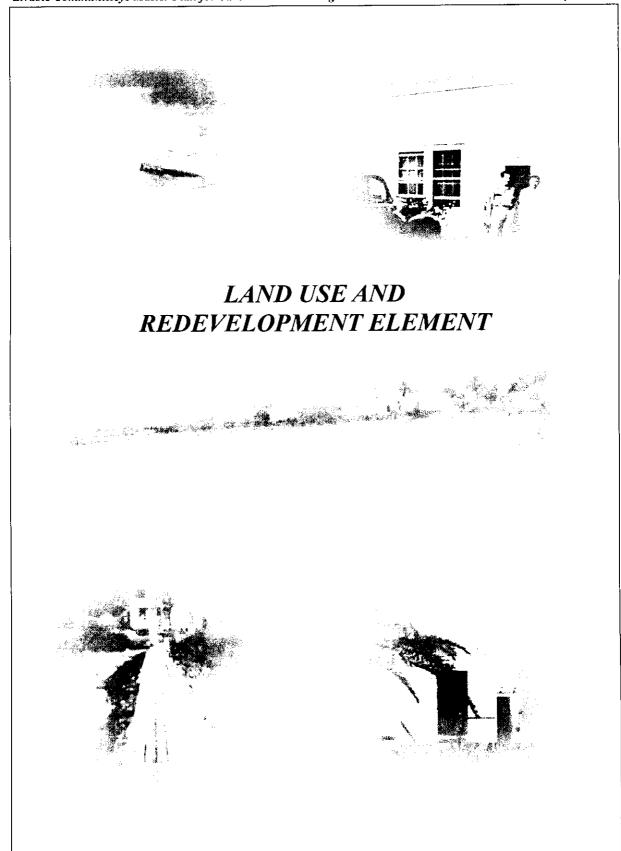
Strategies and Action Items

As part of the Master Planning process the planning staff has identified and evaluated possible strategies for meeting each need. The possible strategies were also evaluated relative to one another to identify conflicts and to identify opportunities for one strategy to fulfill multiple needs. In this way a final set of strategies was completed. Action items were then developed towards implementation of each strategy.

The plan is therefore written in the form of goals, strategies and action items rather than goals, objectives and policies as in the Comprehensive Plan. Where strategies and action items replace current comprehensive plan policies, this is noted and action items for deleting or modifying those policies are included in the applicable element. It is very important to note that this plan will be an addendum to the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Plan remains in full effect in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area.

The plan format is illustrated in the flow chart in Figure 1.7. The flow chart starts with an individual need identified in the plan. A comprehensive strategy for meeting the need is formulated based on the information in hand. If the information in hand is sufficient to implement the strategy the action items for implementation can be written directly into the Master Plan. If not, an action item can be written to procure new information or further analyze existing information. Note that new information not only feeds back into implementation but may reveal new strategies, may redefine the need or may even reveal new needs. To be a meaningful and current implementation tool over the entire twenty-year planning horizon, the Master Plan must include this iterative process of problem solving that monitors success and identifies changing conditions and new issues. It must also allow for timely response and tracking of progress towards problem solving.





GOAL ONE

DIRECT FUTURE GROWTH TO LANDS THAT ARE MOST SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT, PREVENT SPRAWL INTO LESS DEVELOPED AREAS AND ENCOURAGE PRESERVATION OF ENVIRONMEN-TALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

Current Conditions Summary

The community of Tavernier Creek to MM 97 is an older developed community. The majority of the areas appropriate for development have been developed. Therefore it is understandable that approximately 45% of the vacant privately owned parcels in this planning area are in the designated Natural Resource and Conservation Area (Tier I). The area contains several larger parcels and totals 150 vacant acres; 50% of the remaining vacant privately owned acres.

The 490 IS/URM lots outside the Natural Resource and Conservation area (Tier II and Tier III) are those most likely to be developed in the future. However some of these IS/URM lots may contain wetlands or fragmented hammock areas or they may be the yard of a developed lot. The more than one hundred vacant commercial parcels in the property records without structures are primarily parking lots or driveways of existing businesses. The actual potential new commercial development sites are much lower approximately forty parcels.

It is projected that between 140 and 210 new single family housing units may be constructed in the planning area over the next twenty years. With a total of 660 platted IS/URM lots plus 360 vacant parcels which permit residential uses, there are a large number of lots and parcels that will not receive a permit. According to the estimates at least 80% of the vacant lots and parcels in the planning area will not receive a permit for a new residential use during the twenty-year planning horizon. If a portion of the new residential units are built as multi-family employee housing on commercially zoned parcels the number of single family lots not receiving permits in the 20 year planning horizon will increase.

Goal 105 was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners to direct the County's future development to infill areas in existing subdivisions and commercial corridors and to focus the acquisition program towards preserving wetlands and the important terrestrial habitat areas. The goal also addresses the need to reduce the over-all numbers of lots and privately owned vacant lands in the County with a program to purchase fragmented hammocks and vacant lots in subdivisions that are less than fifty percent (50%) built (Tier II). These lots may be sold back to the adjacent neighbors or be held jointly by the community or remain in County ownership as a reserve for birds and small wildlife.

Discouraging sprawl is accomplished as much by maintaining existing uses on scarified lands as it is in preventing development from moving into undeveloped areas. The planning area has a number of uses that are nonconforming because of the Land Use District they are located in. Lawfully established residential uses that are over-density or are in a land use district that does not allow residential uses are made conforming under recent amendments to the Comprehensive

Plan and the Land Development Regulations. Non-residential uses that are non-conforming do not have that same protection and may not be replaced if more than fifty percent (50%) destroyed. Redevelopment of the property is prevented because the non-conformity may not be expanded. Currently there are non-conforming retail uses, professional buildings and restaurants.

Analysis of Community Needs

Property Rights

There are a large numbers of vacant privately owned lots and parcels in the County. The County needs to work with landowners to acquire those lots that are least appropriate for future development. This is only fair to the landowners who will not receive a permit in the twenty-year planning horizon.

Goal 105

The Tier maps need to be finalized and adopted for the planning area to give a clear understanding of where development is appropriate and where the County should be concentrating acquisition efforts. With the State taking additional responsibility for acquiring the Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I), the County needs to be purchasing land to reduce the over-all numbers of lots in the planning area.

Nonconforming Uses

There are non-residential uses and structures within the planning area that are inappropriately classified in regard to land use designation. These buildings often contribute to the character and economic vitality of the planning area and need to be evaluated to determine if the land use designation should be changed. As a result of the non-conforming status of many of these structures, material improvements or enlargements to the site is extremely difficult, thus the structure is not improved and many times the building is left vacant.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 1.1

Designate the entire planning area into Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I), Transition Area (Tier II) or Infill Areas (Tier III) as appropriate.

Action Item 1.1.1: Prepare Tier System Overlay Map for the planning area based on Goal 105 and established planning criteria and principals for designation of each Tier area and public involvement.

Action Item 1.1.2: Adopt the Tier system map separate from but as an Overlay of the Land Use District Map. The Tier System Overlay Map shall be used primarily to focus acquisition efforts in Tier I and Tier II and to guide development to appropriate areas in Tier II and Tier III.

Strategy 1.2

Follow the public acquisition strategy, detailed in Strategy 6.2, to purchase land from willing sellers in the planning area to preserve important upland habitats and reduce the large number of parcels in the planning area, which will not receive a permit in the twenty year planning horizon.

Strategy 1.3

Review and evaluate the land use designation of lawfully established non-conforming land uses and structures within the planning area to determine appropriate designation.

Action Item 1.3.1: Promote community character, establish conformance and resolve land use issues by identifying and changing the land use designation on parcels of land containing non-conforming uses and rezone as appropriate.

Action Item 1.3.2: Discourage the continuance of nonconforming uses that are determined in the review to be inappropriate for the area in which they are located.

Strategy 1.4

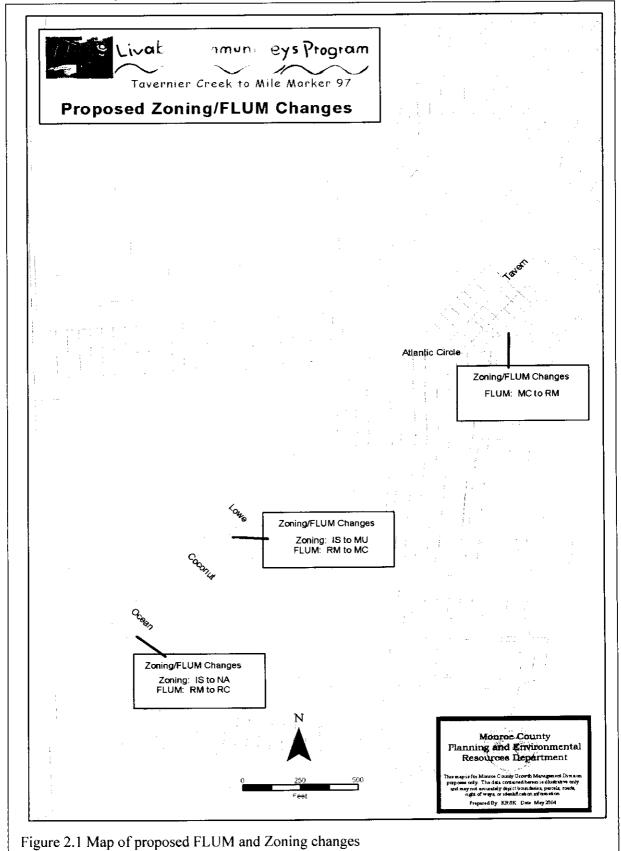
Continue to utilize the Land Use District Map and Supporting Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to regulate land use type, density and intensity on an individual basis within the planning area.

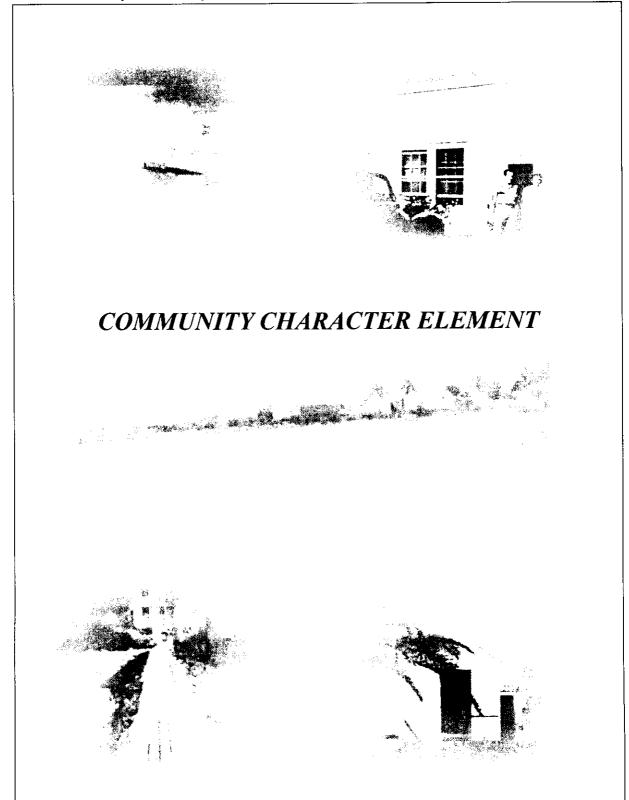
Action Item 1.4.1: Continue to recognize the FLUM categories and land use districts as the regulatory tool used for evaluating individual proposals for compliance with land development standards such as type of use and intensity of use. This will promote orderly and safe development that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and will protect the integrity and conformance status of existing development.

Action Item 1.4.2: Adopt the following parcel specific revisions to the FLUM category and Land Use District Map:

- 1. Change the designation of parcels identified with real estate parcel numbers: 566000; 566240; 477140; 566120; 477150; 477160; 477170; 477210; 565970.0001; and 477180 within the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area from Improved Subdivision (IS) to Mixed Use (MU) on the land use district map and from Residential Medium (RM) to Mixed Use Commercial (MC) on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). This proposed change will eliminate the number of nonconforming structures that exist on these properties and bring them into conformity with the current use and surrounding community.
- 2. Change the designation of parcels identified with real estate parcel numbers: 476750; 476760; 476770; 476780 which are owned by Monroe County and within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Master Plan planning area from Improved Subdivision (IS) to Native Area (NA) and on the Future Land Use Map from Residential Medium (RM) to Residential Conservation (RC)."

Action Item 1.4.3: Change the FLUM designation of parcels identified with the following Real Estate numbers: 555880; 556090; 556080; 555860; 555910; 555890; 555960; 555970; 555850; 555840; 556010; 555830; 556020; 555820; 556040; 556030; 555990; 556070; 556000; 556060, and 556050; which are within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Master Plan planning area from Mixed-Use Commercial (MC) to Residential Medium (RM). The purposed change will prevent an established, built-out neighborhood area with no commercial uses from being considered an area slated for commercial use pursuant to the FLUM. It is of note that Real Estate numbers: 555940; 55950 and 556100 are not listed on the FLUM as Mixed-Use (MC) and were not included.





GOALTWO

PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE QUALITIES OF NEIGHBOR-HOODS BETWEEN TAVERNIER CREEK BRIDGE AND MILE MARKER 97 - ITS SMALL TOWN UNIQUE CHARACTER, LUSH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WATER ORIENTATION.

Current Conditions Summary

The words "small town" serves to both paint a picture and suggest the atmosphere of the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area. This planning area is not extremely diverse, but has many interesting neighborhoods with their own individual identities. From the historic "conch-style" construction, to the mixed use neighborhoods and large commercial center in the traditional town of Tavernier, to the hammock in the northern end of the planning area, a defining characteristic are the green spaces which separate uses and provides privacy to the neighborhoods.

The major land use in this island community is native habitat, both upland hammocks and wetlands. The natural areas surround the residential neighborhoods giving to each a unique "sense of place". The tall native trees are in contrast to areas in the lower Keys where the vegetation is low or was mostly removed during construction activities. The hammock provides a buffer for the residential neighborhoods from the noise and motion on U.S. 1. The hammock stand in the median of U.S. 1 contributes to the over-all environmental and scenic quality of the planning area.

The development pattern is reflected in the proposed Tier Map designations. The infill areas, Tier III, are the existing neighborhoods with more than 50% of the existing lots developed. Tier I contains the larger natural areas, greater then four acres, providing the major divisions between neighborhoods. The smaller patches of fragmented hammocks throughout the area and large Suburban Residential lots with hammock on U.S. 1 are designated Tier II.

Citizens of this planning area during the workshops and responding to surveys identified the proximity to the water, natural environment and open (green area) space as the main qualities they liked about living in this planning area. Preservation of the natural environment and small town "island" character are the qualities identified as most important.

Analysis of Community Need

Development Patterns

Preserving the existing development patterns in this planning area - neighborhoods separated by green space – is of primary importance to the residents. There is also much support for maintaining the tall trees within the neighborhoods. Continued support by citizens of this area for the protection and preservation of these qualities is critical in the implementation of the Master Plan.

U.S. 1 Buffer and Median

The natural vegetated buffer along U.S. 1 and in the median needs to be preserved. The vegetation not only buffers the residential neighborhoods from the major highway in the Florida Keys, but also provides a feeling of a green belt between the traditional towns of Tavernier and Rock Harbor/Key Largo. Expanding the natural vegetation along the roadway would enhance and provide additional buffer to the road and the neighborhoods.

Tier Maps

A mechanism needs to be instituted to identify those areas more appropriate for infill (Tier III) development and other areas that need to be preserved (Tier I) in a natural state. Monroe County is already in the process of developing the Tier Maps pursuant to countywide Smart Growth Initiatives adopted in Goal 105 of the Comprehensive Plan. Any permitted development in the Tier II areas needs to be carefully controlled to consider the character the fragmented hammocks which contribute to the character of this planning area.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 2.1

Limit clearing for new construction to maintain the tree cover in the neighborhoods and along the U.S. 1 corridor area.

Action Item 2.1.1: Amend existing habitat analysis policies and regulations to designate all lots in Tier I in this planning area as automatic high quality and limit clearing to a maximum of twenty percent.

Action Item 2.1.2: Amend existing habitat analysis policies and regulations to designate all lots containing hammock areas in Tier II and Tier III in this planning area, whether old or regrowth, as automatic moderate quality and limit clearing to a maximum of forty percent.

Action Item 2.1.3: Cluster new development on lots adjacent to U.S. 1 between Tavernier Creek and MM 97 away from the roadway maintaining the maximum amount of existing vegetation, even if the quality of the hammock would dictate clustering the development closer to the road under Sec. 9.5-345(f).

Action Item 2.1.4: Prohibit the transfer of development rights (TDRs) to increase density on lots zoned Suburban Residential (SR) with upland native vegetation that are less than 20,000 square feet in size.

Strategy 2.2

Prepare and adopt a Tier System Map for the planning area designating the boundaries of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III lands as described in Comprehensive Plan Policy 105.2.1 and prioritize areas in Tier I for acquisition to maintain the terrestrial environment and Tier II for local character and environmental quality.

Action Item 2.2.1: Acquire Tier I lands, adjacent to publicly owned land, to preserve the major divisions between neighborhoods as well as preserve the most significant environmental habitat.

Action Item 2.2.2: Prioritize the vacant fragmented hammock patches in Tier II, which are not currently protected with a conservation easement, for acquisition by the County. These fragments are an important character element of the planning area.

Strategy 2.3

Increase the native hammock buffer areas adjacent to U.S. 1.

Action Item 2.3.1: Coordinate with Florida Department of Transportation to plant the median of U.S. 1 and any excess right-of-way that does not currently contain hammock, with native vegetation between MM 93 and MM 97.

Action Item 2.3.2: Require landscape buffers in this section of U.S. 1 to be planted with native plants.

Action Item 2.3.3: Encourage existing businesses between Mile Markers 93 and 97 to provide native landscape buffers on their properties.

GOAL THREE

DEFINE, MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER FROM MM 91—MM 93.5.

Current Conditions Summary

Community character was a major point of discussion and planning focus during the LCP process. While the planning area (MM 91- MM 97) as a whole is defined by the native terrestrial habitat Mile Marker 91 to 93.5 has its own unique identity. Defining the community character meant many things to LCP workshop participants and survey respondents including recognition of the unique natural character, maintaining the area's historic character and moderate pace, and enhancement of community gathering areas for conducting business, socializing and recreation.

Homes for the residents of the town are primarily small single family houses or mobile homes; some built as early as the 1920's and 1930's. Larger homes, built more recently, are beginning to fill in the shoreline and replace some of the traditional "conch' style homes. Small mobile homes are also being replaced by "double-wide" or stick built houses. However, the essential character of the area remains one of small homes nestled along the shoreline or within the upland hammocks.

In October 2003 Monroe County proceeded with a design planning process for the commercial corridor area for Mile Marker 91 to 93.5. The charrette was a facilitated community discussion during which design concepts were developed and graphically assembled at the meeting for immediate reaction.

Analysis of Community Needs

U.S. 1 and Major Street Beautification

The idea of the Main Street element introduced and evaluated during the LCP process drew some support in the community with ideas for beautification of U.S. 1 and the commercial center of the island. Circulation and ease of accessibility for the human population was integrated into the beautification element during the corridor enhancement charrette process.

Parking and Setbacks from U.S. 1

When U.S. 1 was widened to four lanes through this planning area many existing businesses lost much of their parking and setback from the roadway. The businesses became non-conforming as to parking and setbacks, this presents a problem when they try to redevelop or when new owners try and start a new business.

Commercial Building Design Guidelines

There may be support for design guidelines for new and replacement buildings. Tavernier is a 'historic community" with many remaining examples of early "conch" construction. Recommendations for design guidelines will be included in the Corridor Enhancement Plan. Care should also be taken to ensure that design requirements do not stifle a positive redevelopment momentum.

Scale of Residential Construction

While there is general support in the community for limited additional residential construction, there is concern that new construction should be of the general scale of existing homes. This issue is not in relation to the larger single-family homes being built in the town, but in relation to the potential for employee housing projects that may be proposed in the area. In particular there was opposition to multi-family "garden apartment" type of units.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 3.1

Recognize and protect the existing mix of land uses in the U.S. 1 corridor area as the character that defines planning area.

Action Item 3.1.1: Designate a "Community Center" from MM 91 to Burton Dr. pursuant to Policy 105.2.15 where Tier III infill and incentives for redevelopment will be encouraged.

Action Item 3.1.2: Limit the size of individual commercial and transient use structures in the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Master Plan planning area (both the Community Center and the Greenbelt) to a maximum of 2,500 square feet. More than one 2,500 square foot building shall be allowed where permitted by the Land Development Regulations. The Urban Commercial (UC) Land Use District containing Tavernier Towne Center should be exempted.

Action Item 3.1.3: Prohibit the designation of new commercial land use districts beyond that contained in this Master Plan in order to protect the existing viability of the U.S. 1 Corridor Area and Community Center and to prevent the further sprawl or strip commercial zoning.

Action Item 3.1.4: Prohibit the following new uses or change of uses within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area: 1) Commercial retail high-intensity uses that generate above one hundred (100) average daily trips per one thousand (1,000) square feet; 2) Storage areas as a principal use; 3) Outdoor retail sales on a vacant lot and any new or expanded outdoor retail sales associated with structures of less than five hundred (500) square feet of floor area.

Strategy 3.2

Develop and adopt a Commercial Corridor Enhancement Plan for the U.S. 1 Corridor Area between MM 91 and MM 93.5.

Action Item 3.2.1: Define the U.S. 1 Community Center as the area from MM 91 to Burton Dr. It is the focus of community activity due to the dominant land use pattern of commercial and other non-residential uses. A program of planning for this area shall be continued and accelerated.

Action Item 3.2.2: Generate a Corridor Enhancement Plan, based upon the corridor enhancement planning process which includes ideas for improvement of traffic and pedestrian/bicycle movement, parking, beautification, and incorporation of parks/open space.

Action Item 3.2.3: Develop and adopt design standards and design guidelines for development within the U.S. 1 Corridor Area and the Community Center.

Action Item 3.2.4: Provide incentives for property owners on U.S. I to make landscaping and building improvements and bring signs into conformance with the Enhancement Plan.

Strategy 3.3

Adopt a Tavernier Main Street District Overlay to include the designated Community Center from MM 91 to Burton Dr. and create Land Development Regulations specific to the overlay.

Action Item 3.3.1: Provide alternative parking options for businesses such as a municipal parking lot.

Action Item 3.3.2: Provide "contextual" setbacks to preserve the historic character of the area and remove existing non-conformities.

Action Item 3.3.3: Define the elements that contribute to the community character of Tavernier and adopt Design Guidelines for development and redevelopment so the qualities of the community are preserved.

Action Item 3.3.4: Prohibit new storage lots on U.S. 1 within the planning area in order to enhance the community character of the U.S. 1 Corridor Area.

Action Item 3.3.5: Require existing commercial parcels proposed for Employee Housing density bonuses be developed in a "village" type design with single family houses, duplexes or town house units with a maximum of four units to a structure.

Action Item 3.3.6: Encourage small businesses, that are not of historic quality, on U.S. 1 to add employee apartments; either attached or on the property if construction can be accomplished within the design guidelines for the commercial corridor.

Action Item 3.3.7: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic non-residential structures for employee housing being careful to maintain the historic qualities of the structures.

GOAL FOUR

PROTECT AND ENHANCE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND AR-CHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES WITHIN TAVERNIER TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMUNITY'S UNIQUE CHARACTER.

Current Conditions Summary

The Comprehensive Plan contains standards for recognizing, designating, protecting, and preserving historic structures within the county (Objective 104), which are further implemented through current Land Development Regulations (Article VIII). Monroe County has stipulated specific procedures for protecting historic, cultural and archaeological resources in the development review process. Under current regulations all new proposed development in the ROGO and NROGO system carry significant bonus or penalty points for projects, which either have an adverse or positive affect on a historic structure or known archaeological resource. In addition, the County coordinates with other agencies and organizations to maintain a current inventory of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources. The County has worked closely with the Tavernier Historic Group and the Historic Florida Keys Foundation to identify current and potential places and sites for future preservation within the planning area. In addition, during the past 20 years, three independent cultural resource surveys have been completed with the planning area. The most recent survey was conducted in July 2003 by GAI Consultants.

At the request of the county, GAI consultants completed an architectural survey of all unincorporated areas and an evaluation for listing sites in the National Register of Historic Places and/or Monroe County Landmarks. The survey included a detailed list of properties located within the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area as well as specific recommendations for the area. Of all the properties surveyed, fifty-three were identified as being eligible for national historic designation. Currently, eight of those properties are designated as Monroe County landmarks and seventeen are listed as Monroe County Historic Landmarks. In addition to the importance of each individual site and/or structure, the consultants recognized Tavernier as being collectively significant and recommended that it be nominated as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. Other recommendations include, completing a comprehensive survey every 5 to 8 years, establishing a marker program, conducting a comprehensive review of the historic preservation ordinance, as well as developing and adopting historic architectural design guidelines for historic properties or those contributing to historic districts.

The primary method of protecting such resources in the planning area has been through the establishment of a historic overlay, land acquisition, and the designation of historic places and sites. The designation process requires the owner of a property proposed for historic designation to voluntarily submit an application requesting the designation. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews the application based on criteria in the LDRs and recommends either approval or denial to the Board of County Commissioners. Only those properties approved for historic designation are subject to the requirements of the ordinance and review by the Historic Preservation Commission. A certificate of appropriateness is required before a permit may be issued on the property. Forty-eight historical places and sites have received local, state, and/or national designation as of adoption of this master plan.

Analysis of Community Need

Protection of Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

The Comprehensive Plan and LDRs contain policies regarding the voluntary designation and protection of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources. There is a need to specifically address the resources within the planning area with specific focus on protecting the integrity of the historic district. Standards are needed that will protect the historical structures, as well as the current landscape and public infrastructure. Coordination between multiple agencies needs to take place to ensure that conservation areas are permanently protected from development.

Design Guidelines for Historic District

The Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations do not address specific design guidelines for historical districts. There is a need to create such guidelines specific to Old Historic Tavernier to maintain and enhance the integrity of the district. New development and substantial improvements have been permitted to occur without regard to the architectural style of the district. Potentially, as development continues to occur in such a way that it does not harmonize with the current character the integrity of the historic district may be lost. These design guidelines should be coordinated with the Corridor Enhancement Plan.

Design Review Committee

There is a need to expand the historic preservation functions of the Historic Preservation Commission to oversee all development activities within the planning area. All development activities that occur within the historic district impact the over-all value of the district and should be designed to reflect the historic character of the area.

Evaluation and Monitoring Resources

Recently, a survey of existing and potential historic resources has been conducted. There is a need to update the existing inventory of resources on a regular basis as the number of buildings and/or sites reach the 50-year threshold for designation eligibility. In addition, there is a need to maintain coordination between the county and other agencies to ensure that regulations for historic designation, preservation and conservation are being met and to limit the overlap in activities.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 4.1

Protect the future integrity of Tavernier's Historic District by adopting ordinances that clearly define the boundaries of the district, commit to preserving the historic qualities of the district and provide guidelines for all future development activities in the district.

Action Item 4.1.1: Expand the boundaries of the Historic District to include all properties highway to ocean from the current Historic District Overlay southern boundary through to Tavernier Creek and the adjacent property to the north in addition to the current historic overlay.

Action Item 4.1.2: Adopt the expanded boundaries of Tavernier Historic District, as an overlay on the Future Land Use Map and the Land Use District Map.

Action Item 4.1.3: Prepare and adopt historic design guidelines and regulations that specifically define the architectural and contextual qualities and criteria that shall be followed for all development, remodeling and redevelopment projects within the District.

Action Item 4.1.4: Investigate the option of expanding the authority of the Historic Preservation Commission to review, approve the design of and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any building permit applications in the Tavernier Historic District for exterior improvement or interior improvement if cited as significant to the properties designation.

Action Item 4.1.5: Investigate the expansion of the boundaries of the Historic District to include additional areas of historic importance.

Strategy 4.2

Coordinate with the Florida Departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, and Community Affairs, local agencies, the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, Keys Electric, Key Largo Waste Treatment District and the South Florida Water Management District to ensure the continuing protection, maintenance and improvement of the historic area.

Action Item 4.2.1: Work with coordinating agencies to investigate the potential of creating a passive pedestrian accessible recreation area at the Tavernier Creek hammocks site, bayside, to be incorporated into the county-wide Overseas Heritage Trail Plan.

Action Item 4.2.2: Work with the Florida Department of Transportation to maintain current pavement widths. In addition, on local streets discourage finished curbs and gutters, and instead encourage grassy or stone lined drainage ditches or natural swales where needed.

Action Item 4.2.3: Coordinate with Public Works to discourage the act of tree topping and/or major pruning along public right of way within the Historic District.

Action Item 4.2.4: Acquire hammock lands within the Historic District to maintain the context of the historic community character.

Action Item 4.2.5: Encourage all agencies to work with the Historic Preservation Commission when considering improvements or changes to any public facility in the Tavernier Historic District; they will need a Certificate of Appropriateness to do improvements.

Strategy 4.3

Provide recognition and definition to the Tavernier Historic Overlay District.

Action Item 4.3.1: Establish a voluntary Historic Marker Plaque program for historic homes that are identified as a local, state, and/or national historic, cultural, or archaeological resource.

Action Item 4.3.2: Erect a historical marker on both north and southbound lanes upon enter-

ing the Historic Tavernier District.

Action Item 4.3.3: Prepare an application to nominate the area defined as "Historic Tavernier" for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Action Item 4.3.4: Create and establish an identification system within the Monroe County Building Permit Tracking system in order to identify historic or contributing properties, which will ensure the protection and proper maintenance of such properties.

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvement Projects

The major fiscal implications found within the Community Character Element are those of land acquisition for the preservation of natural resources and of neighborhood character within the historic district and other neighborhoods within the planning area. The plan calls for all vacant, privately owned parcels designated as Tier I to be considered for acquisition using state or county funding resources. Additionally, the plan calls for the acquisition of several fragmented hammock patches Tier II areas in order to preserve community character and protect the patches from being further divided. While these actions are specifically defined as a part of this element, they are a part of the larger acquisition program described in the Environmental Protection Element.

The Community Character Element also specifically mentions the acquisition of hammock parcels in the historic district to preserve the habitat and character of the area. There are approximately 30 parcels which fall under this category, all to be designated Tier II or Tier III. Tier II parcels are accounted for in the Environmental Protection Element, however, the Tier III parcels are not. The approximate assessed value of the 30 parcels in the historic district is \$600,000.

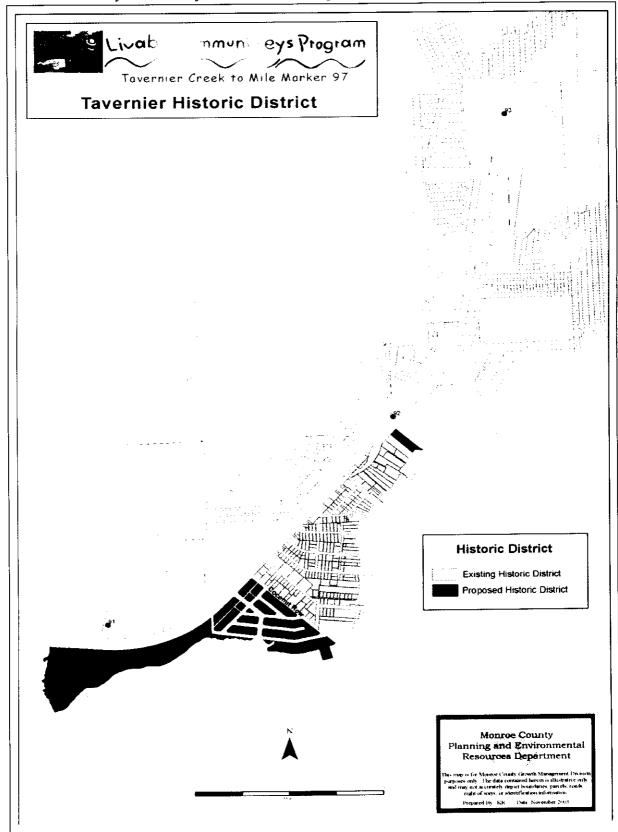
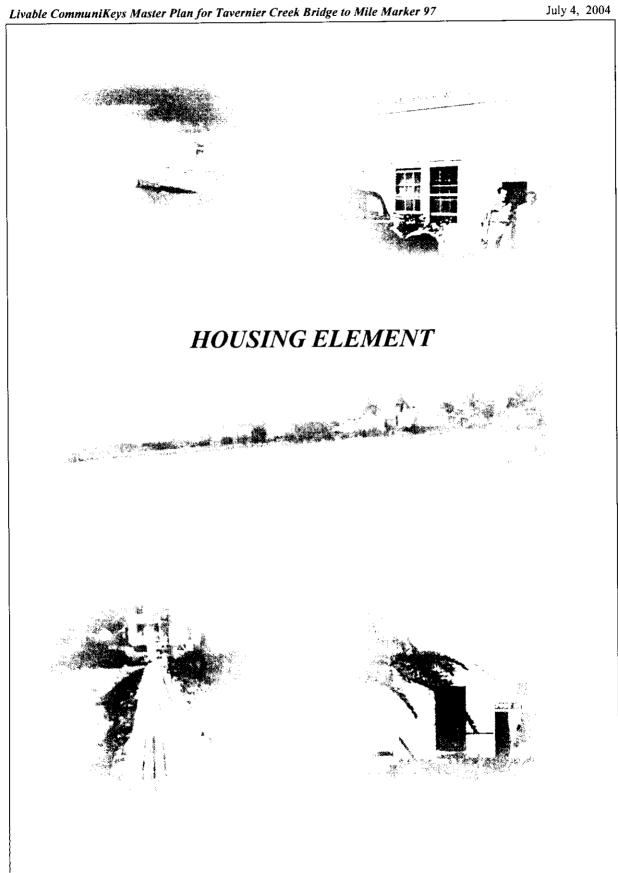


Figure 3.1 Historic overlay district and proposed expanded district area.



GOAL FIVE

MAINTAIN THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND THE WORKFORCE WHILE PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

Current Conditions Summary

This planning area has traditionally been a working community from the early farmers and fishermen to the firemen, teachers and service workers who lived within the area. In the last ten years the demographics of the area has changed with a decline in permanent population of more than 10%, from 1,971 persons to 1,755 persons. The largest decline in population was in the 21 to 54 age group, (15%); the prime working years.

Housing units have increased, according to the Census Bureau, by 235 units, while permanent housing has decreased by 11%, 216 units. This includes a decrease in rental units of 121 units. The change in household types living here permanently is also evident when income level comparisons are made in the U.S. Census for the 1989 to 1999 periods. The median household income for the planning area in 2000 was \$42,830 (the medium income level county-wide was approximately \$42,283). There was a decrease of 380 households making less than \$50,000 a year in the ten-year period and an increase of 164 households making more than \$50,000 a year. Of the sixteen business owners or managers in the planning area who responded to a Planning Department survey in June 2002, none indicated that their employees were paid more than \$40,000 a year and most of their employees lived outside the planning area.

With the upward trend of more seasonal units in the area, the cost of existing housing for the year-round resident is also increasing. According to census figures, 50% of the residents in owner-occupied units and 50% of the residents in rental units in the planning area spend more than one fourth of their monthly household income on housing expenses alone. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the median owner-occupied dwelling unit in the planning area is valued at \$226,000. Discussions with realtors in the area provide an estimate that the selling price of homes in the area has increased by approximately thirty percent (30%) a year for the last two years. The number of renter occupied housing has decreased since 1990, while rentals have increased within the county as a whole. The median rent within the planning area is \$715.

Approximately one third of the dwelling units in the planning area are mobile homes. These have traditionally been an economical alternative for both the workforce and retirees to live in the area. A windshield survey of areas zoned URM, which allow both mobile homes and detached residential units, has resulted in what appears to be an increase of stick built or modular construction and a corresponding decrease in mobile homes over the last few years. According to Building Department records, within the past ten years only 16 mobile homes have been replaced with single family residences, but over half of those have been in the last two years, indicating an increasing trend at mobile home replacement. However, within the past ten years a total of 41 mobile homes have been upgraded to newer models but have not been replaced with single family homes.

Figure 4.1 Shows the existing housing types within the planning area.

